



# Greening Headquarters' Update

JULY 2, 2010

## Greening Updates:

*Office of Operations*

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## Feds, Farmers and Friends Feed Families

This year USDA is partnering with the Office of Personnel Management to participate in the ***Feds, Farmers, and Friends Feed Families (5F)*** summer-long food drive for federal employees. On June 22, Secretary Tom Vilsack sent an email letter to all USDA employees to encourage their participation in the 5F program. Collection boxes for non-perishable food and health items are located in the Whitten, South, Yates buildings, as well as in Park Center, Reporters, School Street, Portals, and Waterfront. All donations in the Washington area go directly to the Capital Area Food Bank that serves more than 700 food pantries, kitchens, and other service organizations in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Please remember to bring in your donations to meet the federal government goal of 1.2 million pounds of donation items this year.

## Updates on Implementing Executive Order 13514: ***Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance***

On June 2, 2010, USDA submitted the USDA Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP) to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The SSPP is a single document that lays out the USDA strategy for achieving the goals and targets required by the E.O. and statutory requirements. The SSPP provides information on performance, cost, schedule, and annual progress. The plan includes our policy and strategy related to Greenhouse Gas Reductions, "Green" Buildings, Regional and Local Planning, Energy & Water Management, Pollution

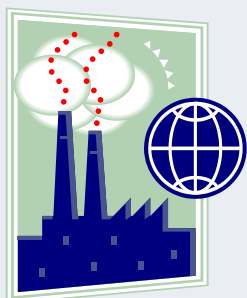
Prevention and Waste Elimination, Sustainable Acquisitions, and Electronic Stewardship and Data Centers. Over the next several years, we will be working on educating and engaging staff to help us meet our challenging goals.

The USDA SSPP will be available to the public later this year. The USDA Sustainable Operations Council (SOC), chaired by Robin Heard, our Senior Sustainability Officer, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all the overall goals and objectives the E.O. and the SSPP.

## Earth Day 2010 USDA Events



NRCS USDA employees demonstrating runoff from various types of soils.



**Protect our  
Planet Earth!**

The theme at this year's USDA Headquarters Earth Day event was water. USDA agencies provided information on their water related programs and initiatives. The turnout was high, and a lot of information was distributed. The Headquarters was not the only local USDA facility with an Earth Day event. At the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, there were informational tables on "green" products such as energy efficient CFL bulbs and products made from recycled and bio-based materials. At the USDA Riverdale facility, there was a large APHIS Earth Day Environmental Fair and Farmers' Market.



### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Drive a fuel-efficient or hybrid car
- Conserve energy at home and at work
- Increase efficiency with ENERGY STAR®
- Promote renewable energy resources
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle

### TAKE ACTION

COMMIT  
2 A LOW-CARBON  
CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE



ENERGY Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy  
www.energysavers.gov



**Green Buildings  
coming to  
USDA!**



In partnership with DOE and Greening America, USDA hosted a large banner in front of the Whitten Building during Earth Day week. Reducing greenhouse gases will become a major focus of USDA and the entire Federal government over the next several years

## **South Building Modernization – Green Buildings**

The South Building Modernization is progressing on schedule. The demolition



phase is completed, and the construction workers are now installing pipes, ductwork and conduits. The South Building Modernization is our effort to transform the building into a sustainable building that will serve our building needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The design team included

many energy-conserving features in the project; some of them will not be obvious to the office employees. One such feature will be the Energy Recovery Unit (ERU). The ERUs will be installed in our fresh air and exhaust ductwork. The ERUs are designed to recover energy that would otherwise be exhausted out of the building and use it to either cool or heat fresh air used in our ventilation system. This ERU works without mixing the exhaust and fresh air streams. ERUs can save significant amounts of energy during our cold winters and our hot and humid summers.





Energy Recovery Units that are being installed in Wing 5.

## Sustainable Landscaping



### Beautiful Green Roof Landscaping



The People's Garden staff has been busy around the USDA complex this spring designing and constructing sustainable landscapes that reflect USDA policies and initiatives. After a couple of months of delay, the installation of the new Court 5 3,000-square-foot green roof has

begun. The new green roof will not only visually enhance a gray, uninspiring courtyard, but it will also create habitat and help protect our region's waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay. The green roof was designed "in-house" with landscape architects from NRCS. Our landscape design team is now working on designing demonstration rain gardens that will capture and cleanse polluted stormwater runoff from the Whitten Building Parking lot along 12<sup>th</sup> street (Farmers Market lot).

If you have been in the People's Garden on the Whitten Building grounds, you will notice that we now have two more raised beds. The spring harvest was a success; so far over 200 pounds of produce have been donated to D.C. Central Kitchens. Also, this spring the Whitten Building's People's Garden was selected as one of the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) Pilot Program gardens. The SITES program is an **interdisciplinary effort** by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and the United States Botanic Garden to create **voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks** for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices.



This year's organic lettuce was planted in interesting designs.

The pollinator garden that was removed to make room for the two additional raised beds has been moved to the George Washington Carver Center (GWCC) where Executive Master Gardeners at GWCC will help maintain this demonstration garden. Instead of the separate pollinator garden at the Whitten People's Garden, "companion" plants were planted in the raised beds intermingled with the organic vegetables.

#### Sustainable Facts

In the continental U.S., carbon sequestration provided by urban trees is estimated to be about 25 million tons per year, which is equivalent to the carbon emitted by almost 18 million cars in one year.

~ Nowak and Crane, 2002; U.S. Climate Technology Cooperation, 2007



**Trees help with  
carbon  
sequestration**



The People's Garden Kicked off National Pollinator Week with an informative one-hour panel discussion on *Pollinators in Decline*. The panel discussion can be seen at:  
[mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/unity/nrcs/Master Pollinators Panel.wmv](mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/unity/nrcs/Master%20Pollinators%20Panel.wmv)

Did you know that Yellow Jackets are not bees, but wasps? Bees rarely sting. In fact the vast majority of bee species (over 4,000 in North America alone) do not have any stingers. For more information on urban bees, see <http://citybees.blogspot.com/>



Linda Dalyucas and Pat Dobson (two Executive Master Gardeners at GWCC) in front of the new Pollinator/Rain Garden being installed at the GWCC. Pollinators quickly found the Itea plants.

## **Recycling Updates:**

Thanks to all our Recycle Champions in our buildings, our recycling rate this spring has climbed to well over 40%. Our waste diversion rate is approximately 60% to 70%. The USDA Headquarters is already well above the 50% waste diversion rate goal set by President Obama in 2009. In April, May, and June, we recycled over 120 tons of materials.



**Remember to  
Recycle!**



Janitorial Staff getting their annual training on the USDA Recycling Program in April. Our janitorial staff are key members of our “Headquarters Green Team.”

Recycle Tip: You can place your clean compostable food trays in the Big Paper Recycle containers. Food waste on the trays may contaminate the paper for recycling, so please do not include the trays that are soiled. The Recycle Staff will collect the paper and trays and sort the trays out for composting at our Recycle Center.

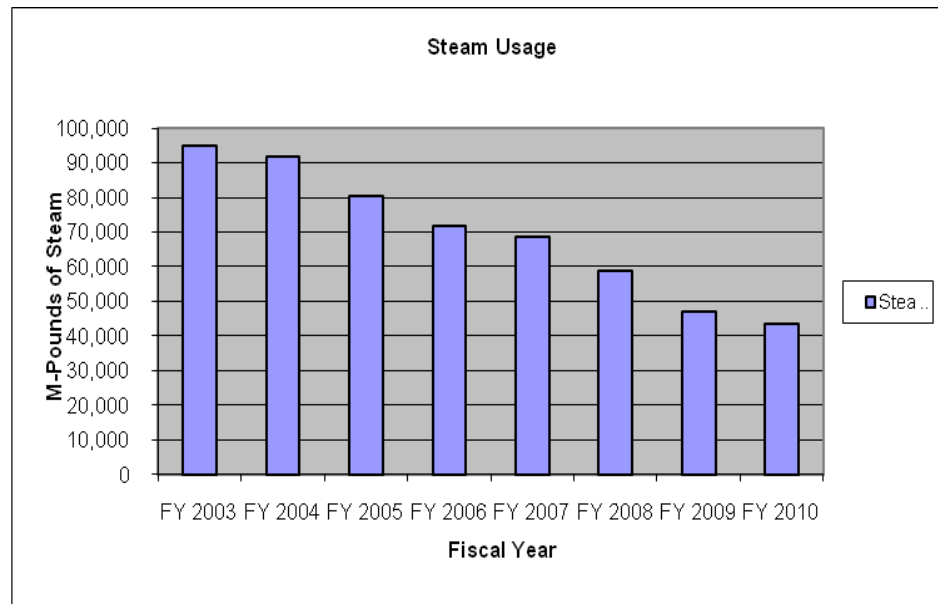


## **Energy Updates**

The heating season is officially over, and we can now say that our steam usage has dropped for the seventh straight year. Our facility is using less than half the steam it was using just seven years ago, and saving close to \$2,000,000 in steam alone in FY 2010, compared to our steam usage in FY 2003.

Our electrical use has also dropped as we have been using electricity more efficiently. This past year, the USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has taken strides to reduce our negative impact within the IT environment. The OCIO recently purchased BigFix software for all USDA agencies. BigFix has the capability to track power usage, provide analysis and evaluation data for power management, and enforce power management settings. One of the OCIO's goals is to reduce the power usage in the USDA in the next year. This is part of their overall commitment to decrease the amount of energy used and the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions released by our workstations and

servers. The OCIO will also be forming a Green Team to set power reduction goals. As the OCIO forms its Green Team, they will be reaching out to request participation in setting these essential goals, which will be the building blocks in fulfilling our objective.



Graph showing steam usage since FY 2003

### Energy Load Reduction Test on June 10

USDA Headquarters had an energy load reduction test on the afternoon of Thursday June 10, 2010. During the one hour test, we reduced our electrical usage by an impressive 650 kilowatts, which is enough electricity to power hundreds of homes. Our electricity reduction efforts during this test demonstrated how USDA Headquarters would make a difference in responding to an actual emergency situation on the power grid. By participating in this electricity reduction effort, we can help reduce the need to build more power plants in the future and we will help improve the reliability of our electrical grid. On June 11, late in the afternoon the next day, PEPCO did declare an operational emergency, and USDA Operations staff was ready with their response.

USDA employees can help by turning off or unplugging all unnecessary electrical equipment before you leave each day as well as by incorporating energy conservation measures during the day, such as closing window blinds during the summer months to keep your office cool and reduce our air conditioning use.